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SKETCH OF THE KWAKIUTL LANGUAGE

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230156

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In the course of a series of investigations undertaken for the Jesup North Pacific Expedition, I collected extensive material on the language of the Kwakiutl Indians, who inhabit northeastern Vancouver island and the adjacent coast of British Columbia. A treatise on the grammar of this language, by Rev. Alfred J. Hall, was published in 1889;² but the author has not succeeded in elucidating its structural peculiarities. I published a brief sketch of the grammar in the Reports of the Committee on the Northwestern Tribes of Canada, appointed by the British Association for the Advancement of Science.³ While the data given in these sketches are in the main correct, the fundamental traits of the language have hitherto remained unknown.

The phonetic system of the Kwakiutl is very rich. It abounds particularly in sounds of the k series and of the l series. The system of consonants includes velars, palatals, anterior palatals, alveolars, and labials. The palatal series (English k) seems to occur only in combination with u articulations. In most of these groups we find a sonans, surd, fortis, and spirans. The sonans is harder than the corresponding English sound. The surd is pronounced with a full breath, while the fortis is a surd with increased stress and suddenness of articulation. The sonans is so strong that it is very easily mistaken for a surd. Besides the groups mentioned before, we have a series of lateral linguals or l sounds; the laryngeal catch; h; y; and w.

¹ Published by authority of the Trustees of the American Museum of Natural History, New York.

² A Grammar of the Kwakiutl Language, *Trans. Royal Society of Canada*, 1888, II, pp. 57-105.

³ *Report of the Sixtieth Meeting of the B. A. A. S.*, 1890, pp. 655-668; also 1896, pp. 585, 586.

This system may be represented as follows:

	Sonans	Surd	Fortis	Spirans	Nasal
Velar	ḡ	q	q!	x	-
Palatal	g(w)	k(w)	k!(w)	X	-
Anterior Palatal	g'	k'	k'!	x'	-
Alveolar	d	t	t!	s	n
Dental	dz	ts	ts!	-	-
Labial	b	p	p!	-	m
Lateral	ɽ	L	L!	l	-
Laryngeal catch	ᵉ				

h, y, w.

The velar series are k sounds pronounced with the soft palate. x corresponds to ch in German *Bach*. The palatal series correspond to our g (hard) and k. X is like x, but pronounced farther forward. g' and k' sound almost like gy and ky (with consonantic y); x' is the German ch in *ich*. d, t, and s are almost dental. ɽ, L, and L! are pronounced with tip of tongue touching the lower teeth, the back of the tongue extending transversely across the hard palate, so that the air escapes suddenly near the first molars. In l the tip of the tongue is in the same position, but the back of the tongue is narrower, so that the air escapes near the canine teeth. The sound is at the same time slightly less explosive than L. l is the same as the English sound. ᵉ is a very faint laryngeal intonation. The exclamation mark is used throughout to indicate increased stress of articulation.

The vowels seem to be quite variable. The indistinct E is very frequent. The two pairs i e and o u probably represent each a single intermediate sound. The whole series of vowels may probably be represented as follows:

E
i e, í, ê, a, ô, o u
ī ē, - ä, ā, â, ō ū

There are a considerable number of rules of euphony which govern the sequences of sounds. The u vowels do not admit of a following anterior palatal, which is changed into a palatal with

following w; for instance, ʔā'wayō-g'a *this salmon-weir*, becomes ʔā'wayōgwa. aa is often contracted to ä; for instance, ō^hma-a *that chieftainness*, becomes ō^hmä. oa is contracted to ô; for instance, ʔā'wayō-a *that salmon-weir*, becomes ʔā'wayô. It seems that combinations of consonants do not occur in the beginning of words. Extensive clusters of consonants are rare, and even combinations of two consonants are restricted in number. The first sound of such a combination is generally a spirans, nasal, l or ʔ, all of which are produced by stricture, not by closure. k sounds, which in the process of word-composition become first sounds of combinations of consonants, are aspirated; l sounds become ʔ. When, in the process of composition, inadmissible combinations of consonants occur, the second consonant is often dropped. Terminal consonants of words, when followed by words with initial consonants, are often modified in the manner here indicated. From g'ōk^u *house*, is formed g'ōX^u dzē *large house*; from ^hnēk^u *to say*, ^hnē'x'sō *he is told*. Instead of laa'mL mē'x^hēL *then he will sleep*, we have laa'mʔ mē'x^hēL. Examples of dropping of consonants are the following: qā's-x^hid *he begins to walk*, becomes qā's'id; Wā'k'lēqēs-x^hLa *named Wā'k'lēqēs*, becomes Wā'k'lēqēsLa.

Suffixes influence the terminal sounds of stems, which they often harden or soften. When softener, surd and fortis are transformed into the sonans of the same series; when hardened, sonans and surd are transformed into the fortis. s softened becomes dz or y; hardened, it becomes ts!. x' softened and hardened becomes n; Xw softened and hardened becomes w. ʔ softened and hardened becomes l. n, m, l, y, w, when softened, become sonant by being preceded by the laryngeal catch. The following examples will illustrate these processes:

Stem	Softened	Hardened
L!aqw-, <i>red</i>	L!ā'ʔw-atō, <i>red-eared</i>	L!ā'q!w-ōbō, <i>red-breasted</i>
hanL-, <i>to shoot</i>	ha'nT-as, <i>place of shooting</i>	ha'nL!-āla, <i>noise of shooting</i>
qas-, <i>to walk</i>	qā'y-as, <i>place of walking</i>	qā'ts!-ēnox, <i>walker</i>

Stem	Softened	Hardened
mix', to strike	men-a'ts!ē, <i>drum=striking receptacle</i>	me'n ^ε xst, to strike hind end
sēXw-, to paddle	sē'w-ayu, <i>paddle</i>	sē' ^ε w-ēnox, <i>paddler</i>
ts!ō' -, black	ts!ō'l-is, <i>black beach</i>	ts!ō' ^ε l-a, <i>black rock</i>
^ε wun-, to hide	^ε wu' ^ε n-īl, to hide in the house	^ε wu ^ε n-a', to hide on rock
de'nxal-, to sing	de'nxal ^ε -as, <i>place of singing</i>	

Grammatical relations are expressed by means of suffixes and by reduplication. Suffixes affect the word to which they are attached in different ways. A considerable number are attached to the terminal sound of the word, without causing any modifications of the same, except such as are required by the rules of euphony. To this class belong almost all pronominal, temporal, and conjunctive suffixes. Another group of suffixes is attached to the stem of the word, which loses all its word-forming suffixes. It is probable that all nouns are compounds of a stem and of a number of suffixes. The latter disappear entirely when the noun is combined with one of this class of suffixes, and we observe apparently an apocope of the end of the noun, while actually its stem reappears freed from its suffixes. At the same time, the suffix often modifies the terminal consonant of the stem. Thus we have *bēgwā'nēm man*, stem: *bēgw-*, and from this *bēklu's man in the woods*; *met!ā'nē clam*, stem: *met!-*, and from this *medā'd having clams*. This process is analogous to what has been observed in many Indian languages, and has been termed "decapitation" or "apocope." From the instances with which I am familiar, I am inclined to believe that a thorough knowledge of the process will prove that the apparent apocope is due either to laws of euphony, or to the dropping of affixes, as in the case here described.

Other changes of the stem are due to reduplication, the method of which varies according to the grammatical function it performs. Double or even triple reduplication may occur in the

same word; for instance, from the stem *bEgw- man*, we have *bā'bagum boy*, and *bā'bEbagum boys*.

In discussing the groups of relations expressed by grammatical processes, we will take up first those relating to the person speaking, or the pronominal relations. The language has a strong tendency to define every action and every object in all its relations to the persons conversing. These relations are expressed by the personal, demonstrative, and possessive pronouns. The homology between demonstrative and personal pronouns is here perfect. The personal pronoun indicates the person acting or acted upon, as speaker, person addressed, and person spoken of; the demonstrative indicates the location of an action or of an object as near the speaker, near the person addressed, or near the person spoken of. This strict homology appears in many American languages, but in few is the expression of location so rigidly demanded as in Kwakiutl. The location of object or action in relation to the three persons—speaker, person addressed, and person spoken of—must always be expressed. These three positions are further subdivided into two groups, the one expressing objects and actions visible to the speaker, the other expressing those invisible to the speaker.

Location near	1st Person	2d Person	3d Person
Visible to speaker	-k'	-x	-
Invisible to speaker	-g'a	-q'	-a

Personal pronouns appear mostly incorporated in the verb. The pronominal form, which we designate as "first person plural," is not a true plural. Plurality implies the presence of several individuals of the same kind. A plurality of speakers is seldom possible; but our "we" expresses either "I and thou," or "I and he." It is therefore not surprising that many languages, and among them the Kwakiutl, use distinct forms for these two ideas. On the other hand, the second and third persons plural are real plurals, and are designated in Kwakiutl by a suffix, *-x'da⁶x*,

which precedes the pronominal ending. In the Hē'iltsaq^u dialect this plural is expressed by reduplication.

The personal pronouns have separate forms for expressing their syntactic relation in the sentence; that is to say, there are pronominal cases. These are the subjective (nominative) and objective (accusative).

	1st Person	2d Person	3d Person	Inclusive	Exclusive
Subjective	-EN	-ES	-	-nts	nu ⁸ X
Objective	-	-ōL	-q	-	-

A number of secondary cases are derived from these primary forms,—a locative from the objective, an instrumentalis and finalis from the subjective.

	1st Pers.	2d Pers.	3d. Pers.	Inclusive	Exclusive
Locative	g'ā'xEN	lōL	laq	g'ā'xents	g'ā'xenu ⁸ X
Instrumentalis	(-EN ?)	-ōs	-s	(-ents ?)	(-enu ⁸ X ?)
Finalis	qa ⁸ n	qa ⁸ s	qaē	qa ⁸ nts	qa ⁸ nu ⁸ X

The old objective of the first person, which occurs in the Hē'iltsaq^u dialect, is entirely lost, and replaced by the locative. The instrumentalis of the second and third persons is identical with the possessive. I have not found any unquestionable forms of this case for the first person.

The forms of verbs with incorporated object are derived by combinations of the above forms in the order subject, direct object, indirect object (locative), instrumentalis, finalis. It seems that the first person singular had an older form, -ENL, which is still used in the Koskimo dialect, and which persists in all forms in which the subject first person is followed by another pronominal form. An example of verbal forms with incorporated object and instrument is *mīx'ē'ī'daqs he struck him with it*, from *mīx'ē'ī'd to strike, -aq him, -s with it*. When substantives are introduced in a sentence of this kind, they are placed following the pronoun which indicates their function. At the same time the pronoun is modified. For instance, *mīx'ē'ī'dēda begwā'nEmaqs the man struck him with it*; *mīx'ē'ī'dēda begwā'nEmaxa g'inā'nEms the*

man struck the child with it; mix·⁸t'dēda bEgwa'nEmaxa g'ina'-nEmsa tle'sEm *the man struck the child with the stone*.

The terminals da, xa, and sa might be interpreted as nominative, accusative, instrumentalis of an article, if it were not for their intimate connection with the preceding verb. The pronominal object and the instrumentalis at the end of the subject in our first example also show that we have here really an incorporation of the noun in the verbal expression. The terminal a, which characterizes the subject followed by an object (like the terminal a in bEgwa'nEma of our example), must be explained as the retained a of the compound pronominal ending -aq (as in mix·⁸t'daq), and seems to me one of the strongest proofs of our interpretation. The connection between subject of the first person and object elucidates the same point: mix·⁸t'dEnLaq *I strike him*, where -La- is inserted between the subject first person -En and the pronominal object -q; and mix·⁸t'dELaxa g'ina'nEm *I strike the child*, which form is strictly analogous to the form with pronominal object. The nouns which form subject, object, indirect object or instrumentalis in the sentence always enter the verbal expression in their full form. They do not lose their word-forming suffixes, as they often do in composition with various other classes of suffixes.

The construction of the sentence is therefore analogous to that found in other American languages, most of which incorporate object and indirect object, although the degree and character of incorporation vary. Mexican and Kootenay embody the object freed of its word-forming affixes, and often replace it by the pronominal object. Chinook, Sioux, and many other languages incorporate only the pronominal representative in the verb, and place the noun as apposition at the end of the sentence. Kwa-kiutl pursues the same method as Chinook, but, instead of placing the nouns as appositions, it places them immediately following the representative pronoun, thus creating a word-complex held together by pronominal particles.

imperative suffixes, such as -g'a, inchoative; -la, continuative. -x' followed by pronominal endings forms an exhortative. The conditional is expressed by the suffix δ : 'qa^ssō lā'lax *if you should go*.

The verb generally consists of a stem and numerous adverbial suffixes, which modify or limit the meaning of the verbal stem. These adverbial expressions may be limitations of time, of cause, of manner, of object. They embrace, therefore, our tenses, conjunctions, adverbs, and even objects or prepositional expressions. The lack of distinction in the method of expressing grammatical relations and material ideas, which is found in most Indian languages, manifests itself in the variety of ideas expressed by these suffixes.

There are four temporal suffixes which are used with verbs as well as with nouns. Words without suffix represent an aorist or historic tense which is indefinite as to time. Three suffixes designate past tenses: -u|, -x'^sid, -x'dē. -u| designates the remote past, -x'^sid the recent past, and -x'dē the transition from present to past. The limits between -u| and x'^sid are not distinct. The usage depends upon the period with which the time elapsed is generally compared. In speaking of last year's salmon-run, it is compared to the period between two fishing seasons, so that half a year is considered remote past. In speaking of the death of a person, the time elapsed since the death is compared with man's life, and therefore -u| is not used until five years or more after death. The words for yesterday and day-before-yesterday contain the ending -u|, and consequently, when these are used, the verb must take the same ending. The use of -x'dē is quite distinct from the two former tenses. It always implies the transition from existence to non-existence. The future is expressed by the suffix -L. All the temporal suffixes are attached to the full word.

A number of derivational suffixes may be grouped with those expressing tenses. We find, among others, a desiderative ex-

pressed by the suffix *-ēxst*, for instance, *nā'qēxst* *to desire to drink*; a causative *-mas*, for instance, *qā'samas* *to cause to walk*; *-^snakula* implying a gradual motion, for instance, *tē'gu^snakula* *to hang one after the other* (from *tē'kwa* *to hang*). The most important forms in this group are the inchoative and the "tentative," which latter expresses the attempt to perform an action.

The inchoative is very frequently used, the continuative form being strictly distinguished from it, as is also the case in the allied Nootka. The continuative of most verbs ends in *-a*, while the inchoative ends in *-x^sid*, which ending, however, undergoes many changes according to the rules of euphony. From *qā'sa* *to walk*, we have *qā's^sid* *to begin to walk*; from *mō'kwa* *to tie*, *mō'X^swid*. The locative suffixes, which will later be mentioned, have separate forms for inchoative and continuative, which are formed somewhat irregularly (see page 718).

The "tentative" is formed by reduplication with long *ā* vowel, and hardened terminal consonant: *dā'doq'wa* *to endeavor to see*, from *dō'qwa*, *to see*.

Conjunctive suffixes are numerous. The simple verbal endings described before are used only when the sentence is without inner connection with previous statements—that is to say, when a new idea is introduced in the discourse. That a subject has been referred to before, or that it has been in the mind of the speaker before, is expressed by the suffix *-m*. *g'ā'xEn^snEmō'kwē* means "my friend of whom I have not been thinking has come unexpectedly"; *g'ā'xmEn^snEmō'kwē* means "my friend who was expected has arrived." *-mēs* indicates a very weak causal relation, similar to our "and so"; *-g'ił* is causal, signifying "therefore"; *-ta* and *-tla* signify "but"; *-xa*, "also."

More or less adverbial are the following: *-k'as* *really*; *-x'Lā* *very*; *-x'ta* *too bad, that!*; *-x'st* *as usual*; *-x'sā* *still*; *-axōt* *and I did not know it before*, a mild expression of surprise.

Locative suffixes are very numerous. Many of them have distinctive continuative and inchoative forms:

	Continuative	Inchoative
<i>in the house</i>	-il	-lił
<i>on the ground</i>	-us	-ls
<i>on rocks</i>	-a	-ala
<i>up</i>	-usta	-ustala

Closely related to the locative suffixes are the objective suffixes, which express either the object acted upon or the subject of an intransitive verb. Suffixes designating parts of the body are particularly numerous in this class: -x'lē *head*; -x'ts!ā'ne *hand*; -bôē *chest*, etc. But others are not wanting: -sqwap *fire*; -ēsta *water*. Sometimes the suffix may be considered as expressing a local relation rather than an objective one; but it never expresses an instrumental relation, as is the case in Siouan and Athapascan languages.

A number of suffixes express moods: -lax implies the uncertainty of the conditional; -nē^s the optative "oh, if!" Here we may class the suffix -sō, which expresses the passive.

In this group the series of verbal nouns are particularly remarkable. They are numerous, and in construction always retain their verbal character, governing the pronominal cases that belong to the verb. The most important ones among these are -ēnē^s, signifying the abstract noun; for instance, k'!ē'lak'!ēnē^s *the clubbing*. This verbal occurs only with the possessive pronoun. It is used very frequently to express the intentional when it is preceded by the particle qa *in order to* or *for*.

The indefinite verbal, which does not differ from the simple form of the third person singular without demonstrative ending, is very frequently used to express subordinate clauses, particularly causal and temporal subordination. The verbal is then expressed in the objective case, takes the possessive suffix, and besides this the demonstrative form peculiar to each person. The following example will make this clear:

ā'l^sem yū'X^swidexg'in g'ā'xik' *the wind just began to blow when I came.*
 ā'l^sem yū'X^swidexs g'ā'xaaqōs *the wind just began to blow when you came.*

ā'ᵉEm yu'Xᵉwidexs g'ā'xaē the wind just began to blow when he came.
(ā'ᵉEm lately, yu'Xᵉwid to begin to blow, g'āx to come.)

Other verbal nouns are -kᵘ, a passive participle and noun; as g'ilō'Tikᵘ a thing stolen; -anEm obtained by, as g'ilō'TanEm obtained by stealing (from g'ilō'La to steal); -ayu instrument, as dō'gwayu trolling-line (from dō'kwa to troll); -Em instrument, as k'ilE'm net (from k'ilLa' to fish with net); -ēnoxᵘ nomen actoris, as g'itlē'noxᵘ wood-worker (from g'ita' to do work in wood); and many others.

The suffix -ayu instrument sometimes expresses a passive, particularly of intransitive verbs: qā'sᵉidayu he was the means of walking, i. e., he was walked away with by somebody.

There are also a considerable number of suffixes which transform nouns into verbs. The possessive verb is used so frequently that it gives the language a peculiar character. It is formed by suffixing -ad to the stem of the noun, which loses all its suffixes. ḤENE'm wife has the stem ḤEg- and, therefore, the Kwakiutl form ḤEg'a'd having a wife. nEXusk'i'n a berry has the stem nEX- and, therefore, nEwa'd having berries.

To eat a certain object is expressed by the reduplicated stem of the noun; from nEXusk'i'n berry, nEXna'Xᵘ. This derivative, however, is exceedingly irregular. -ōL to obtain, -sila to take care of, -g'ila to make, are examples of other derivatives.

Among the categories expressed by grammatical processes we have to mention those of plurality and diminution. The plural seems to have been originally a distributive. It is expressed by reduplication, as bEgwa'nEm pl. bē'bEgwanEm man, g'ōkᵘ pl. g'ig'ō'kᵘ house. There is a decided preference for the use of the long ē in the reduplicated syllable. All substantives designating human beings have plural forms, while many other words have no reduplicated plural. Words with local suffixes form their plural with the suffix -Em, which probably has a collective meaning, designating a group of individuals: g'i'lg'ilala pl. g'ilE'mg'ilala to walk on rocks. Diminutives are formed from nouns with a vowel in the reduplicated syllable, softened terminal consonant, and the

suffix -Em: g'ók house, g'ā'g'ogum *small house*; mē'gwat seal, mā'megwadEm *small seal*.

Numerals are formed on the decimal system. They take classifying suffixes, the most important among which are those for designating human beings, round objects, long objects, and flat objects. The classification of nouns and verbs in regard to their form is also found in words denoting existence. These have separate forms for round, long, flat, and soft objects.

In conclusion I will give a few lines of texts with grammatical explanation:

G'ókula ¹ laēda ¹	g'ā'lāsa ²	Dzā'wadeēnoxwē ³ lā'xa ⁴
The village was it said the	first of the	Dzā'wadeēnox ^u at the
ēnē'ldzās ⁵ wās ⁶	Gwa'ēxa ⁷ 1ē'šadēs ⁷	Bē'benadē. ⁸
upper course of	the river of Gwa'ē the	having name of 'Having Phosphorescence.'
Wā, ⁹ lā'ēlaē ¹⁰	ā'la pā'lēda ¹¹	ēwā'latsema. ¹² Wā, ⁹ laē'm ¹³ laē ¹³
Well, then it is said	was really hungry the	great tribe. Well, then it is said
hē'menaiaem ¹⁴	ēnemō'kwēda ¹⁵	pō'sdanāxa ¹⁶ ēnē'nā'la. ¹⁷ Wā, ⁹
always	one	died of hunger the days. Well,
lā'ēlaē ¹⁰	yā'q!ēg'alēda ¹⁸	ēnemō'kwē lax ⁴ a ¹⁹ y!kwās ⁵
then it is said	began to speak the	one among the speakers of
Qa'wadilišala la'xēs ¹⁹	g'ō'kulōtē. ²⁰ Lā'ēlaē ¹⁰	ēnē'k'a: "ēyax'da ²¹ x ²¹ "
Qa'wadilišala	to his tribe.	Then he said: "Oh!"
wā'entsōs ²²	hō'lēla g'ā'xen, ²³	g'ō'kulōt, ²⁰ qa ²⁴ n ²⁴ yā'q!ēg'alēsg'a ²⁵
(do)	listen to me,	tribe, that I begin to speak of this
šwā'laasg'asg'in ²⁶	nā'qēk. ²⁷	
this kind of this my	this mind."	

¹ g'ók^u house; -la continuative verbal suffix; -ē la quotative; -ē pronominal ending pointing to following noun; -da pronominal subjective ending pointing to following noun.

² g'ā'la first; g'ā'lā contraction of g'ā'la-a terminal *a* indicating absence; -sa possessive ending indicating following noun.

³ dzā'Xun olachen (a fish); -ad having, requires the dropping of the formative suffix -un in dzā'Xun and softens the terminal X to w; -ēnox^u people of; -ē demonstrative suffix.

⁴ laq at it; with ending indicating following noun, laxa.

⁵ ā contracted from a-a, see ⁹; -s possessive ending.

⁸ - xa pronominal objective ending pointing to following noun.

⁷ ʔē'qem, stem ʔēq - name ; - ad having, see ³ ; - s possessive.

⁶ bē'x'a to phosphoresce ; - ad having, see ³ ; - ē demonstrative suffix.

⁹ A conjunctive interjection.

¹⁰ la, conjunction 'then,' treated in Kwakiutl as an intransitive verb ; - ⁸la quotative ; - ē demonstrative suffix.

¹¹ pāla hungry, starving ; - ēda see ¹.

¹² wā'las great ; - sēm a group of individuals.

¹³ lae'm from la then ; - m indicates that the subject of the discourse, namely the starvation, has been referred to before ; - ⁸la quotative.

¹⁴ - m see ¹³.

¹⁵ nēm one, - ōk^u classifying suffix indicating persons ; - ēda see ¹.

¹⁶ pō'sdana literally too hungry, from pō'sqa to feel hungry ; - xa objective pronominal ending, which form is used for all expressions of time.

¹⁷ nā'la day, reduplicated plural.

¹⁸ yā'qant!ala to speak, inchoative yā'q!ēg'al ; these contain the suffixes - k'!āla and - g'al, noise and beginning of noise.

¹⁹ lax to, - ēs his, the form laxēs means to his own, while lax g'ō'kulōtēs would mean to the other man's tribe.

²⁰ g'ōk^u tribe, - lōt companion.

²¹ ya oh, - x'da⁸x^u pronominal plural suffix of second and third persons.

²² Exhortative of wā, see ⁹.

g'a'xēn locative of first person personal pronoun.

²³ qa⁸n finalis of first person personal pronoun.

²⁴ - s instrumentalis ; - g'a demonstrative, signifying this near me invisible.

²⁵ Šwā] thus, as referred to ; - as place of ; hence Šwā'laas the place referred to, the manner referred to ; - g'a this near me invisible ; - s genitive ; g'in this mine near me.

²⁷ nā'qē mind ; - k' this near me visible.

Free translation.—The first Dza'wadeēnox^u lived on the upper course of the river Gwa'ē at a place named 'Having Phosphorescence.' The people of the great tribe were really hungry. Every day some of them died of hunger. Then one of the speakers of Qa'wadilišala began to speak to his tribe and said : "Listen to me, my tribe ; I will say what I am thinking."

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